1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
Mirebalais



important point in the warfare between the northern Empire of Christophe and the southern Republic of Pétion is well known, since the boundary between the two, never definitely fixed, might be roughly considered as the Artibonite, control of which, as always, depended on also obtaining control of the strategic hills about the town.[11] It is not possible to discover more than approximate figures for the population of Mirebalais at the present time, since no census of the district has been made, and the most recent figure of 51,000 for the commune is derived from the baptismal records in the parish church.[12]

From the earliest years of settlement of the valley, the town has been the center of its life. The government of the commune is located here; here the courts sit; and here the best schools and the only church of the district are found. Yet it is a small town, numbering less then two hundred and fifty houses, and crossed by but three principal thoroughfares stretching north and south, with ten or twelve cross-lanes. The houses on the principal streets, rectangular and small, are built of wood, plastered over with clay, painted, and roofed with sheet iron. On the outskirts of the town the roofing is of straw, or banana-leaf thatch, while the walls themselves are made of twilled wythes. No house lacks its veranda, however small, where people may be seen sitting late of an afternoon and early in the evening, but the life of the women is lived chiefly in the courtyards behind these houses that line the streets, where the cookhouses are found and the storehouses, and where all work is done. The *place*, or town square, lies at the point where the principal route between Port-au-Prince and the Dominican border turns sharply to the east. Consisting of an acre or two of cleared land, it is overgrown with weeds except when, in preparing for festive occasions, the prisoners from the town jail may be seen spending long hours, machetes in hand, cutting the grass, a few blades at a time. North of the square stands the church, a substan-

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 197 SV3 Haiti SV3
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North of the square stands the church, a substantial structure with rounded arches in the Roman style, roofed over, like most other buildings, withgalvanized iron. Other public buildings are the town hall — the Mairie — and the "Hall of Justice"; near by are the stone walls of a public building begun some years ago as a school, but destined apparently to house what is known as the "Bureau of Contributions," a euphemism for the tax-colector's quarters. Despite the fact that Mirebalais was one of the most difficult regions for the American occupation to subdue during the Caco uprising of 1918–20,[12] it was one of the first districts where the Guarde d'Haiti was completely Haitianized, and from which all American Marine officers were withdrawn. Only a small detachment is stationed there at present. Its well-kept barracks are near the church, and the prisons form a part of the same compound, from whence issue daily the striped-suited prisoners, men and women, under guard or alone on parole, who do communal work in the townand the near-by countryside.

The town awakens at dawn to the chattering of domesticated guinea-fowl and the crowing of cocks. Occasionally a camion rumbles through the principal thoroughfare; more rarely an automobile dashes by in great clouds of dust on its way to Las Cahobas, or Hinche, or Santo Domingo City. If it is a market day, the streets are early filled with country folk on their way to dispose of their produce, and the clatter from the market place behind the church is heard everywhere until the heat of the day brings a lull to all commerce, and drowsiness once more settles over everything. By mid-afternoon during the planting season, drums can be heard over the countryside. The sounds are not those of the "throbbing" *vodun* drums — though they have more than once been mistaken for them by travelers — but they set the rhythm for the communal work of the *combites*, which perform cooperative agricultural labor. As the rapid dusk follows the disappearance of the sun behind the mountains, the voices of

3: Leyburn Z-4,5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3



674 Soldiers, then, had no great difficulty policing town and country-
369 side, for there was little more crime in the towns than in rural regions. A person arrested would be haled before the nearest juge de
696 paix who would, if necessary, sentence him to jail—which meant
697 sending him to one of the larger towns. This was rather a severe penalty, for the jails were filthy; moreover, only about ten cents a week was ordinarily allotted to each prisoner for food with the result that if a prisoner's family did not supply him, he was likely to be near starvation. Extra work was required for extra fare. Haiti was probably no worse off in respect to its jails than most European and American countries at the time, for this was before the era of prison reform. Inmates of jails were likely to be only petty thieves.

697 During certain régimes the presidents or their generals managed to have numbers of convicts sentenced to hard work, in order to have forced labor on their private estates or projects dear to them. Under any administration there were likely to be a few convicts who performed repair work on streets and roads. It was the usual practice to chain or rope them together by pairs, three yards apart; accompanied by soldiers with loaded muskets, the convicts labored from daylight to sunset, with an hour and a half for a meal at noon. The government pretended to provide for them, but in order to save expense two of the criminals accompanied by two soldiers with fixed bayonets were sent about the neighborhood to beg for the group. The result was that the wretches went ill fed and half naked. They slept in jail on beds which were little more than boards.

701 The final and most persistent branch of government has been the
175 army.[11] Owing to the overmilitarization of Haiti, generals were perennially participating in the civil government—or engaged in overthrowing it. It was to be expected that following the revolution the new independent state formed in 1804 should have a military cast. Dessalines, Christophe, Pétion, Geffrard, Boyer, Cangé, Yayou, Magloire Ambroise, Férou, François, Capoix, Rigaud—these were the great generals and the only important statesmen. It was as if in America not only Washington had been a military leader, but also Adams, Jefferson, Franklin, Jay, Hamilton, Madison, Pinckney,

[647] 11. In most governments there has been a body which, although connected with the legislature, had functions pertaining to the law. This was the Chamber of Accounts, a body of five men who examined into and reported to the president upon every branch of expenditure and collection of revenues. It might recommend to him certain financial reforms or improvements, but had no power to enforce its suggestions.